in Paul's conclusion
to the Corinthians
he writes that church
to address a lot of issues
but first let me say this
God gives us feelings
of love
fear
compassion
lots of things
but also understand this
that our feelings are the most shallow part of us
if we live our lives guided by our feelings
we will be all over the place every which way
this way, that way
feelings are fickle they go up and down
a man is saved by facts
not feelings
but Paul writes to Corinthians
and finally tells them this
he doesn't tell them to judge their feelings
he says examine yourselves
whether you be in the faith
in other words take your life
not based upon a memory of an event 30 years ago but take your life
and hold it up against the word of God
have I repented?
have I believed?
am I repenting?
am I believing?
am I loving?
am I worshipping?
and friend we can know
the spirit of God
wants us to know
1st Kings chapter 18
1st Kings chapter 18
begin reading begin reading verse 36
God bless you Wendy
Sister Wanda for the singing boy the choir
sounded good this morning
told you last week
the thought of my heart
has been the God of Elijah
we spent a lot of time in the New Testament over
the last few months in the book of Ephesians
and the model prayer last week we looked

at 1st Kings chapter 17
Elisha sent to that
that winter woman's house that drought that has occurred that oil that didn't run out
that meal that never failed
continue reading in 1st Kings chapter 17
the son of this woman dies
and the Lord brings life back to him
now we get here to 1st Kings chapter 18 there's a lot in this
but I want to begin reading verse number 36 I'm going to skip a lot here
and Lord willing we may go back and look at some of these verses
but begin in verse 36
1st Kings chapter 18
the Bible says
that it came to pass at the time of the offering
of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet
came near and said
Lord God of Abraham Isaac and of Israel
let it be known this day
that thou art God in Israel
and that I am thy servant
and that I have done all these things at thy word
hear me oh Lord hear me
that this people may know that thou art the Lord God
and thou hast turned their hearts back again
then the fire of the Lord fell
and consumed the burnt sacrifice
and the wood
and the stones
and the dust and licked up the water
that was in the trench
lastly verse 39
it says when all the people saw it
they fell on their faces and they said the Lord
he is the God
the Lord
he is the God let's pray
dear father I thank you
Lord that the God of Elijah is alive and well
Lord I thank you for this church for this place for everyone that is in attendance
God I pray that you would take your work your word this morning
Lord I thank you for using it for me to examine my life
my thoughts
and my feelings and my actions and my deeds
God I pray this morning that every one of us
would place our own lives
Lord in front of your word in front of you
Lord that you might bring comfort

you might bring strength you might bring peace
dear God
that you might also bring conviction and healing
Lord take this time you please use it
for the glory and honor of your name and
therefore the good of your church and your people
in Jesus name I pray amen
amen I would like for you to try to see something this morning
in your mind I want you to try to imagine it
I want you to try to feel it I want you to try
to hear it
I think if you was there you could probably
even smell it
450 men
we may have 150
100
200 people here this morning
double this crowd
450
150 men they began to cry out to their God Baal
from morning
until noon
not for a few minutes but for hours upon hours upon hours
they lift their voices and they cry out
the Bible says there was none that regarded none answered
and these men got so passionate that they began
to cut themselves
with stones
they began to bleed profusely and leap upon
the altar that they had made
they cried
from noon all the way to evening in verse 29
it says this there was neither voice
nor any answer nor any
that regarded
folks it's difficult to find more sincere
men
for six hours
they cry out
to a God that doesn't exist
they have placed their hope in a God that doesn't exist
they're sincere
they're passionate
but it would also be more difficult it would be extremely difficult to find men
who are more sincerely wrong
passion
and sincerity

have never
been an accurate gauge of what is true and what is real
folks this is such a sad scene
because such is the sadness of false hope
such is the sadness
of false religion
and shortly after this Elijah
the prophet of God
takes his turn
there's only one of him
these men have cried they've called out they've cut themselves and Elijah
takes his place he's not cocky but he is extremely confident
he's confident his God is real
he remembers chapter 17
he remembers when the the brook ran dry and God fed him with the birds the Arabians
brought him bread and flesh every morning and bread and flesh every evening
he remembers when the brook dried up and God said I have commanded
God was a million steps ahead of this whole situation I've commanded a widow woman
to sustain thee there and so Elijah goes to this woman's house and said ma'am
you're going to have to put priority in things you're going to have to feed me first
all I've got though is just enough of one last
meal for me and my son but Elijah saw as this meal
never wasted and the oil never run out how this
great God is remarkably powerful remarkably real
he takes his turn here on
this contest at Mount Carmel
not cocky but confident
in who his God is
he has seen God raise his boy's son
but Elijah also longed for these people to turn their hearts back to God
he longed for these people to know God
as he knew him to experience God as he had experienced him they were familiar with
the name of God even the past actions of God but these were people who were back
from God and Elijah takes his turn
confident his God was real with the true desire for his people to come and know him
but more than anything else Elijah longed for
his God above all false gods to be magnified
and glorified and for this God to show himself
and can I tell you folks the fire of God fell
not a spark not a trickle not a flicker not a flame
but violent fire consuming fire I mean God showed
up and God showed out and everybody there knew it
it wasn't for theater
it wasn't for show
it was to prove a point
that there is only
one God

and that this God is aware
he's remarkably powerful and he's remarkably real
folks it would be so easy for us to get fixated
on this fire that we read about in verse 38
it says in the fire the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood
and the dust and the stones and licked up the water
that was in the trenches so easy to look at this
and see what God did and get fixated
on this
but can I tell you there's a danger in doing this
so preacher what is the danger in doing so
it's dangerous when we simply get fixated
on a momentary display
it's dangerous when we begin to crave experiencing
and experience
you understand where I'm coming from
sadly there's too many people in too many churches do that
we set the mood just right we play just the right song we get the lights just right
we get everything in order so that people can come in and you can experience
and experience you can get a momentary display of the grace of God of the power
of God I think some of this by the way is actually fabricated and we're playing on
people's feelings what I'm getting at here is our desire shouldn't be for a momentary
display of God's goodness of God's grace what we need to be longing for folks is a
state of being where your preacher abides in the tent of God's presence I dwell
within this fire of God that I'm filling him I'm longing him I'm desiring him
I worship him I long for him that I can live in the warmth of God's fire
and folks in order
for us to abide with him
in order for us to live in the warmth of God's fire
to experience God
not just for a moment
but to experience God in our day to day lives experience
God in this church there are some things that must occur
this morning I want to share with you on the thought of before
the fire fell
before the fire fell
this is one of my favorite scenes in all of scripture now I'd have loved to seen Noah
after a well threw him up I'd have loved to seen the Red Sea part I'd have loved to
seen all these things happen but I got a picture in my mind of old elderly Elijah
sitting there after he had already mocked him a little bit maybe your God can't hear
you he's on a walk or he's talking and he's pursuing somebody maybe he's
just sleeping and you need to wake him up so he had a little bit of jest with him
on this thing but I see these 400
folks this is the world in which we live in now I'm telling you there's a lot of
people in here and you've got it too you've got
hope and you're sincere but your hope and sincere
is sincerely wrong you're banking on something that isn't real you're working

off of feeling you're working off of emotion and there
is God and he knows it's God that's real and it's not for show it's not for theater
he says God I want you to turn these people back I want you to be glorified
and magnified so we're going to set these oxen up here these bullets and we're
going to douse them with water if you're God's real here answer by fire if my
God's real here answer by fire there was no fire for them but there was fire from God
and then we'll go wow look at all this fire
that's not the point
the point
is for these people
to come back and know God
so what happened preacher before the fire failed
go back to chapter 18
verse number one three things I want to leave with you this morning
number one there was confrontation I know we don't like that word
I don't think we should be people that seek confrontation we should be people
that seek peace and harmony and unity but there was a confrontation that took place
prior to the fire of God falling look at chapter 18
verse number one the Bible says and it came to pass after many days that the word of
the Lord came to Elijah in the third year
this drought had been going on for three years God sent
Elijah to Ahab to tell him I'm turning the spigot off
turn it off
three years later God shows back up to Elijah he says you go tell Ahab I'm fixing
to turn it back on again go show thyself in Ahab and I
will send rain upon the earth look at verse number seven
it says that Obadiah was in the way behold Elijah met him and he knew him and fell
on his face and said art thou that Lord my Elijah
and he answered and said
I am
I love this go tell thou Lord
behold Elijah is here
go down to verse 15
verse 16
and it says so Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him
and Ahab went to meet Elijah verse 17
and it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah
that Ahab said it to him aren't thou he that troubleth Israel and he answered
and said I have not troubled Israel
but thou and thy father's house and ye have forsaken the commandment of the Lord
and thou has followed Baal if you're not familiar with your Bible Ahab is the king of
Israel he had done more chapter 17
it says in any that come beforehand to provoke the Lord God to anger God says Elijah
to Ahab says I'm turning the water off no rain or dew for
three years now God sends Elijah back to Ahab to confront
Ahab that Elijah is here
Elijah comes out

Ahab comes out Elijah looks at Crooked King right square in his eyeballs
and said I'm not the problem
you are
now folks Elijah wasn't going out looking for a fight
he was a man under a divine assignment
not to appease
not to excuse he was sent
by God to confront
the problem
folks there's times in our life where confrontation is unavoidable we just
can't dodge it we just can't duck it we can't get around it but there's also times
in our life where confrontation is absolutely required
it's essential it is absolutely necessary and one of those times I believe the most
important times in our life we're talking about not just the fire of God falling
but abiding in the presence of God
experiencing God dwelling with God returning back to God there has to be a
confrontation in our life not with your neighbor not with the church not with anybody
else but I set myself like Sister Wendy nose to nose before the word of God
and there's a confrontation between myself and
sin and what thus sayeth the word of the Lord
that confrontation must take place
folks nothing
will comfort a man or cleanse a man like the spirit of God through the word of God
there ain't nothing else in this world that can do it but I can tell you it will
not do either of those things until it first confronts the man
the spirit of God and the word of God will bring comfort it will bring cleansing
but it will not do either until that man is first confronted
me and Mitzi was driving the other day one of the things I love about being over here
the drive don't get any shorter but I get a lot of time
with me and Mitzi and we get to talking about stuff
and we were just talking about all kind of stuff
and going back we'll be married 31 years next month
and begin to bring up some things and really particularly that I had done I brought
them up and I told her I said you know what's amazing
it's shocking to look back and see
how blind I could really be
we've been married for less than a year and I went out and bought a new truck
he said what's wrong with that preacher
well the problem was that I didn't tell my wife
I told my dad I said hey I want to go get me
a new truck he said okay I'll meet you over
but we look back and go how can I be so blind how can I miss this how
can I not see this in my life and folks there's spiritual ramifications to this
there's a spiritual lesson in this that we
can unless we're willing to confront the Bible
to our lives we can get so blind we don't even recognize what's going on in our lives
David writes in the 51st Psalm after he committed

adultery by Stephen had Uriah killed he said God restored to me the joy of my
salvation and can I tell you God did that but not
until he sent Nathan to confront him with his sin
folks as people of God as children of God who long to experience more than church
long to experience more than religion some brief moment where revival got us giddy
I'm talking about living in the warmth of the fire of God we should welcome this
confrontation I love what David writes in Psalms 139
he says search me oh God and know my heart try me and know my thoughts and see
if there be any wickedness in me and lead me in the way of everlasting Jordan
you know what David is asking for God I want you to remove the blindness that I have
in my life I want you to search me know me in order to show me that I might be
willing Stacey to confront that thing
that is creating dysfunction
and lack of fellowship between me and you Lord
don't you want the fire to fall
even more than that
don't you want to live
in the warmth of God's presence and peace
church it ain't gonna happen
until we take the word of God led by the spirit of God and confront those things
in our life that are contrary to the will of God
there was confrontation
there was also a challenge if you would
look here at verse number 18 the Bible says
and he answered and said I have not troubled Israel but thou and thy father's house
and you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thou hast followed Balaam he
says now therefore sinned and gathered to me all
Israel unto Mount Carmel and the prophets of Baal 450
and the prophets of the grove 400
would eat at Jezebel's table so I have sent it to all the children of Israel and
gather the prophets together unto Mount Carmel can y'all see what's taking place
Jezebel's got these false prophets 450 of them
Elijah says bring them but guess who else is coming I want all Israel to come up here
I want the people of God to come
so I have sent it to all the children of Israel and
gather the prophets together in Mount Carmel look verse 21
and Elijah came unto all the people and said how long halt ye between two opinions if
the Lord be God follow him but if Baal then follow him and the people answered him
not a word folks we got to understand this is far more than Elijah and Ahab as a
matter of fact at the end of the day this ain't really about Ahab at all this is
about a holy God and his back slidden people
and first they are confronted with a question
how long halt ye between two opinions say preacher
what in the world does that mean it means to limp
he says how long are y'all going to continue to limp and dabble and straddle between
two different worlds two different gods two different opinions but then he issues a
challenge to them if the Lord be God then follow him if Baal follow him y'all know

the best preaching ain't over your head it's simple easy to understand I love what Elijah's done I mean he just broke this thing simple I mean just got it really really clear he said here's the deal Randy Hester
between two worlds
you can't continue to hold two opinions
if God's God then follow him if Baal's the God then follow
him but you will not be allowed to serve two masters
Jesus doubles down on that in Matthew chapter number 6
I'm gonna read that to you Matthew chapter 6 verse 24
look what Jesus says
no man can serve two masters for he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other you cannot serve God in material things so Elijah is right here said here's the thing now we gotta confront this deal we gotta confront the sin I have gotta be confronted my sins gotta be confronted if I'm gonna dwell God listen you can't get saved until you're
willing to confront the sin that separates you from God
as a child of God you can't walk with God unless you're willing to confront the sin that's broken the fellowship between you and God you
say you lose your salvation no I'll be married for 31
years to Mincey we're gonna be married to the day
God takes us apart but Elijah saying you cannot
continue to keep operating the way that you're operating
because you're living
in two different things
I would tell you this really it's weird the things that God used to open your mind
I messed around and ran over a squirrel
David between your house and Nicky's house the other day
I didn't mean to run over the squirrel I ran
over a squirrel anybody ever ran over a squirrel
that bum fuzzle me
squirrels are some of the fastest creatures you'll ever see
they can jump this high
they can get out of the way
you want to know why I ran on that squirrel
he couldn't make up his mind
y'all seen him do it
I'm not joking this way I'm like just pick a side
folks
indecisiveness is going to kill some of you
it's going to kill your marriage kill your testimony kill your walk it's broken your fellowship with God here's the question if God's God follow him if he ain't don't
the Lord speaks through James he said a double minded man is unstable and in all his ways what does that mean his loyalty is divided
he can't make up his mind
and because he's that way he limps he just goes through life
and he's weak
I was thinking just now

the message of the church of Laodicea by the way most preachers I'm not trying to say like I got it right now but I understand most preachers have preached this wrong forever what does the Lord say to the Laodiceans and what he calls them lukewarm he says I wish that you were cold or hot
I wish you was one or the other but because you are lukewarm most preachers say God would just rather you be turned off to him no that's not what it means at all that water that comes through the Laodiceans through those tributaries and I forgot how they got it there hot water was useful
cold water
refreshing but that tepid water was nauseating
be useful
pick a side
but what you can't do what God will now allow us to do is continue to walk and walk and walk and walk and dare think that we can experience a momentary display of God's power that ain't who it's for it's for the man that confronts sin it's for a man who answers the challenge and the question folks it really is this simple is God God is he I mean listen we're going to answer the question is God
who he says he is and all that he says he is
is he sovereign is he king is he the messiah
is he the savior is he loving is he all powerful
is he all good is he all just does he love you more than anything else in this world
is he the provider of daily bread
if he is then we must wholeheartedly
unreservedly
carry our cross
and follow after him
and nothing less halfway won't do
preacher that's radical no that's bible
nothing else
will do
and here's where this grabbed me folks
this is something Mike that you're going to have to answer
day after day after day after day
I remember the first time I come over here a guy I work with
I turned in my keys to my new expedition
gave us a deck truck so big it had a hallway
man it was nice decked out with leather and tvs
I turned in my keys
I said I need you to carry me
to another time I was blind I said I need you to carry me
to car mikes so I can go get me a car
I cashed out my 401k went and bought me a car did I
run that past my wife no I didn't do that one either
it's major how blind we can be sometimes
the guy asked me said what in the world are you doing Brian
you've been here for 15 years
and you know how simple it was

then
I said brother I believe that God departed the Red Sea
and I believe this God
has told me it's time to leave this and go to that
and you can't dabble
you gotta decide
but folks that was 16 years ago
and at the end of the day that decision's been made but I gotta decide tomorrow
will I confront the sin in my life
will I look at those things
and call them what they are
and cry out to God for forgiveness and repentance
will I say God
are you really God and if you are you will settle for nothing less
than for Nicky Newell
to die to himself
and chase after him
with all that we have all of these things happened by the way
before the first flame fell
there was one last thing that occurred
and that was construction look at verse 8 chapter 18
verse 30
the Bible says
chapter 18
verse 30
and Elijah said
unto all the people
come near unto me
and all the people came near unto him
and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down
and Elijah took 12 stones
according to the number of the tribes
of the sons of Jacob unto whom the word of the Lord came saying
Israel shall be thy name
and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord
I want you to go back I want you to go back though
look at verse 21 look at the end of verse 21
and Elijah came unto all the people and said how long halt ye
between two opinions if the Lord be God follow him but if Baal then follow him
and it says the people answered him not a word
can I tell you what's happening
there was no excuses
there was no buts
the spirit of God
said this man's right
can I tell you where this gets good you know what
they didn't leave

they didn't leave
and I love this verse in verse number 30
where it says Elijah
said unto all the people
come near unto me
so here's this crowd if you have it maybe it's New Bethel and you listen to
what God has said and what he talks about and
what he's doing and you sit there this morning
and you hang your head and say you know what brother Brian is talking about
describes me in so many ways God doesn't say kick them out
no they hung their head they were convicted
and fatherly Elijah invites them and says why don't y'all come close
gather up
and this old man
he gets down on the ground
he gets his knees dirty
and he begins to repair
those things that have been neglected
he begins to build back
that altar
that was broken down
he begins to take these things and mold them back the way they were supposed to be
see the reality is devout men had communed here with God before there was an altar
here before people had met here with God before
but in order for them to do it again there
was some much needed and long overdue repair
that was going to have to take place
and folks this ain't got a thing in the world to do
with rocks or stones or mortar
it has nothing to do with beautiful buildings there's plenty of those
we got one
folks this has got everything to do
with the condition of our heart
the awareness
of our need
and the privilege that is before us see an altar
is a place
where you meet with God
to examine
vital things
write that down
I know I stand on it but it don't have to be this
it's a place
where you come and it can be at your house it can be
right here I don't care where it is top of Mount Carmel on the back 40
but an altar is a place where we come and we meet with God and we ask the question
dear God how are things between you and me

that we look and we see the holiness of God
we see the love of God
we see the call of God we look at our
standing with God and we begin to examine these deep things in our life
see before the fire failed sin had to be confronted
they had to answer the question
accept the challenge but they had to come back to this very very intimate place
and look and see that altars had fallen and we're going to put this thing
back together again an altar is a place where we see the privilege
and the opportunity for restoration and worship
there was construction
see the fire of God
was about to fall
but not until
not until
these things were addressed
folks folks if we long to live
abide
in the presence of God's holy fire
the warmth of it
we're going to have to get our hands dirty
and we're going to have to get our knees dirty
out and if you'll get a song
some of you need to come right now
and take a place
right next to Elijah and say Lord I'm tired of dabbling and straddling
you've allowed me to see that you are God and you are
the only God and the only way to know you is a full
complete total trust reliance chase pursuit
and God I want to begin the day
at my own altar
my own decision
friend get ready
fire of God
will warm us and keep us let's pray heavenly father
Lord I pray today
Lord I come first of all with thankfulness
that you have used this to confront me
that I have to take my own attitudes and my own feelings and my own thoughts
and I have to look at those things compared to who you are
and they have to be called for what they are
but dear God there is none other but you
and halfway won't do
if we cry out to save
you will save
if we cry out to keep you will keep
God have your way in this congregation

in Jesus sweet name we pray
amen let's stand
get your hands and your knees dirty let's pray let's pray
let's pray let's pray let's pray let's pray let's pray